Fear of flute girls, fear of falling

Book Section

Fear of flute girls, fear of falling*

Within the texts of the Hippocratic corpus, in both *Epidemics* 5 and 7, we read of two men who sought treatment for what we would now call phobias. Forming two of the 54 chapters that are shared by both collections,[1] their case histories are given consecutively, apparently not because the writer grouped them together due to their similarity,[2] but because they approached him together; the second man, Democles, is "ho met' ekeinou", "who was with him". It is noteworthy that these patients meet the physician together; normally only one case at a time is described in a Hippocratic case

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[1] Langholf 1977 argued that the parallel texts derived from the library at Cos.

[2] [Hippocrates] *Epid*. 5. 81 and 82: 7. 86 and 87. The cases are in a section along with patients suffering from delirium, visual disturbances, and depression.

history.[3] Both cases are striking. The first man, Nicanor, suffers from "fear of flute girls" or, more specifically, symptoms brought on by hearing the *aulos* play at the symposium; he has no symptoms if he hears this instrument in the daytime. This appears to be a very culturally-specific, or indeed idiosyncratic, phobia.[4] The second case contrasts in its apparent universality;[5] a fear of heights and bridges, so severe that, even if the bridge is over a very low ditch, Democles is compelled to get off the bridge and walk through the ditch to the other side.

These two books of the *Epidemics* were dismissed in the Galenic tradition as late, and so were not considered the genuine works of Hippocrates; book 5 was attributed by Galen to Hippocrates the younger, son of Draco.[6] As there was no Galenic commentary on them, both books were relatively neglected by Renaissance and early modern readers.[7]

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[3] While those at the conference speculated that the men may have been homosexual partners, and Jandolo translates the case of Democles as "che viveva con lui" and later glosses this as "faceva abitualmente vita in comune con un certo Nicandro" (1967, 45 and 47-8), there is nothing in the text to suggest we should go this far; the form *meta* + genitive pronoun is a common one, with *ho meta tinos*, for example, meaning 'his companion' in a non-sexual sense. *LSJ* points here to examples such as Herodotus 1.86 and Plato, *Protagoras* 315b. There are few other examples of *meta* + genitive in the Hippocratic corpus in the sense of "una cum aliquo", the only other one in *Epidemics* being 1.11 (Loeb I.164, Littré 2.636), a reference to the patient working "along with the doctor" against the disease. Jouanna and Grmek 2000, 38 n. 3 speculate that the two men "renforçaient peut-être leurs obsessions" but correctly point out that there is no way of telling whether they lived together, or simply came to visit the doctor together.

[4] Jandolo 1967, 48: "una particolare forma di idiosincrasia fobica".

[5] Jandolo 1967, 47 presents this as "un caso di classica vertigine psiconevrotica". Doctor et al. 2008, xiii amalgamate the two Hippocratic individuals into a single "highly phobic individual"; they use Errera's article, on which see further below, although they name him "Errara".

[6] Galen, *De difficultate respirationis* 2, 8 (7.854-5 Kühn).

[7] Nutton 1990, 425 ff.; Graumann 2000, 22.

However, as Jouanna and Grmek pointed out, they were rehabilitated by the nineteenth-century editor Émile Littré, who admired their detailed comments on individual cases.[8] Claims for the nature of the texts as pure observation were however challenged from Langholf's work of 1990 onwards, and they are now considered to be "filtered reality", the observations being guided by prior theory and assumptions.[9]

Here are the two case histories in the recent Loeb translation of Wesley Smith, using the versions in *Epidemics* 5:

> Nicanor's affection, when he went to a drinking party, was fear of the flute girl. Whenever he heard the voice of the flute begin to play at a symposium, masses of terrors rose up. He said that he could hardly bear it when it was night, but if he heard it in the daytime he was not affected. Such symptoms persisted over a long period of time.
>
> Democles, who was with him, seemed blind and powerless of body, and could not go along a cliff, nor on to a bridge to cross a ditch of the least depth, but he could go through the ditch itself. This affected him for some time.

In these Hippocratic case histories, it is worth noting that in the first "he said" features; in the *Epidemics* 7 version of Democles, the text includes "He said" here too, to read "He said he could not go along a cliff ...". We are apparently receiving the patients' voices,[10] rather than a medical diagnosis. Patient voices come through elsewhere in the *Epidemics* collections. For example, in *Epidemics 7* there are also two cases in which a woman patient's own feelings or beliefs about her condition are flagged up. In 7.28, the wife of Polemarchos "said she felt as though there was a gathering about her heart". In 7.11, the wife of Hermoptolemos, sick with a fever in the winter, "said that her heart had been damaged".

To the modern reader, it may seem striking that no diagnosis, nor treatment, is given, simply a description of what the patients experienced; however, this pattern is typical of

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[8] Jouanna and Grmek 2000, xvii.

[9] Langholf 1990, 208; current scholarship usefully summarised by Graumann 2000, 59.

[10] Jouanna and Grmek 2000, 38 n. 2.

the *Epidemics* collections. In terms of treatment, elsewhere in *Epidemics* fear is considered something that the physician should be willing to induce "for the sake of restoring colour and humours".[11] As fear is not always bad, perhaps these men would not have been treated, merely talked with, about the effects of the fear on their bodies. The lack of diagnoses has not prevented modern commentators from adding their own. For example, Corvisier suggested that Nicanor's diagnosis combines "an obsession, and alcoholism".[12] I will argue here that this is a misunderstanding of the symposiac context of Nicanor's fear, and that these cases need to be replaced within their cultural context. The most common retrodiagnosis offered for them in the period from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century was "melancholy" and then, from the nineteenth century until the present, "phobia". A recent textbook on psychiatric and mental health nursing correctly notes that there is little discussion of ancient anxiety disorders in modern literature, and quotes in full these two cases as examples of phobia;[13] classical texts are widely cited in modern works on phobia, to give authority and a sense of continuity. Before considering their original meaning, I will first examine how the texts have been used within these two diagnostic categories.

Writing the history of phobia I: melancholy, mania and social phobia

Until the development of the category of "phobia", the diagnosis for both our cases was one of "melancholy", mania and melancholy being the two main diagnoses of conditions of the mind in ancient medicine.[14] In particular, *Aphorisms* 6.23, "Fear (*phobos*) or depression (*dysthymia*) that is prolonged means melancholia", encouraged readers familiar with the rest of the Hippocratic corpus to see Nicanor and Democles in this way. As *Aphorisms* was central to medical education from the Middle Ages onwards,[15] and

[11] *Epidemics* 2.4, 4.

[12] Corvisier 1985, 106. For a summary of recent diagnoses, see Graumann 2000, 242-3.

[13] Elder et al. 2009, 38.

[14] For an overview of ancient texts on melancholy, see Flashar 1966.

[15] King 1993, 57-60.

had the status of a "genuine work" of Hippocrates, the statement in 6.23 was taken very seriously; "prolonged" fear could be read as applying to both Nicanor and Democles, as their symptoms endured "for some time". Renaissance commentators, such as Anuce Foës, whose edition of the Hippocratic corpus was particularly widely used, readily made this connection.[16] Francisco Valles linked the case of Nicanor to another section of the *Aphorisms*, 4.9, which advises purging in melancholics, seeing a link between his symptoms being worse at night (a time which, Valles notes, is full of fear for everyone) and the darkness of the fluids of melancholia.[17]

There is one further Hippocratic reference to the story of Nicanor; it features in the pseudepigrapha, which date from the Hellenistic period, as part of the series of 'letters' in which Hippocrates diagnoses the madness of Democritus. Nicanor is not named, but is clearly intended in Letter 19 "On madness", which ends with "And there was another who was seized, when he went to a symposium, by fear of the flute girl if he heard her playing. But when he heard it in the daytime he suffered no effect".[18] The case is given after a discussion of the preceding chapter of *Epidemics* 5, the fatal case of Androthales (5.80), which suggests that bile is the cause of this man's delirium. The pseudepigraphic writer assumes that madness is due either to phlegm, or to bile, affecting the brain: madness from phlegm is a quiet form, while that from bile is a violent form. He links "fearful dreams" (*enypnia phobera*) and terrors (*phoboi*) to the heating effects on the brain of excess bile, *cholê*. The suggestion, then, is that Nicanor suffers from too much bile; not, it may be noted, specifically the 'black' bile of melancholy.

While Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) mentioned neither Nicanor nor Democles, in modern works this classic text on the condition is often elided with these Hippocratic accounts. Marks gives "a case of Hippocrates' described by Burton":

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[16] Foës 1595, 253.

[17] Valles 1554, 546.

[18] L 9.386; Smith 1990, 94-6. Jouanna and Grmek 2000, lvi point out that *Letter* 19 is based on the version in *Epidemics* 5.

> Through bashfulness, suspicion and timorousness, will not be seen abroad, ... He dare not come in company, for fear he should be misused, disgraced, overshoot himself in gestures or speeches, or be sick; he thinks every man observes him...[19]

This is in fact from Burton's section on "Symptoms or signs in the mind",[20] and is attributed there to the pseudo-Hippocratic *De insaniam et melancholiam*, which Burton cites elsewhere as the Calvi edition.[21] Marco Fabio Calvi's 1525 Latin translation of the complete works of Hippocrates included *Hippocratis de furore insaniave seu mania* (687-690) followed immediately by *De atrae bilis agitatione melancholiave* (690-696). Burton himself was well aware that the attribution of these short treatises to Hippocrates was challenged by scholars, and Calvi adds after the title of the first of these "which however Galen says is not by Hippocrates".[22] Comparing Marks with Burton, it is clear that Marks has chosen to omit sections of Burton's text; after "will not be seen abroad", Burton added "loves darknesse as life, and cannot endure the light, or to sit in lightsome places, his hat still in his eyes, he will neither see, nor be seene by his good will"[23] and it is after this that he cites "Hippocrates lib. de Insaniam et Melancholiam". "Loving darkness" does not sit well with Nicanor's night-time fear of the flute. The passage in Burton continues with "Hee dare not come in company..." and after "every man observes him" expounds further as "aimes at him, derides him, owes him malice". Marks' careful selection of phrases from Burton suggests that the modern writer is moulding this historical source not only in calling this "a case of Hippocrates'" but also by moving it away from Burton's picture of melancholy so that it is a better fit with modern views of phobia.

What are these views? The concept of phobia dates from the nineteenth century; Westphal's *Die Agoraphobie* (1872) is usually cited as the classic text from which

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[19] Marks 1969, 152.

[20] 1989.1.386.25-30.

[21] 1989.1.382.5-9.

[22] "Hyppocrates in his book of melancholy (if at least it be his)", Burton 1989.1.168.2-4; quem tamen Hippocratis Galenus esse negat, Calvi 1525, 687.

[23] Rufus fr. 14 Pormann, from ar'Rāzī, has Rufus' melancholic wanting to be left alone.

modern approaches derive.[24] In DSM-IV, phobia is described as excessive or unreasonable fear in the presence of, or in anticipation of, a specific object or situation; the diagnosis involves the affected person's acknowledgement that the fear felt is indeed excessive or unreasonable. The sufferer will either avoid the stimulus or endure it "with intense anxiety and distress".[25] The fact that they are speaking to a doctor suggests that these two men believe their fear to be "excessive".[26] Democles avoids: he has given up on bridges. But Nicanor endures: he keeps going back to symposia.

To today's reader, Nicanor's behaviour may resonate with the rise of therapy for phobia based on controlled and increasing exposure to the stimulus, popular in the late 1960s/early 1970s, although it is clearly not working for him; in the later 1970s and 1980s, cognitive approaches to phobia were preferred.[27] Psychiatrists in the 1960s and early 1970s supported the approach of exposing the sufferer to the stimulus by quoting from another ancient source, Celsus, on how to treat hydrophobia,

> ... throw the patient unawares into a water tank he has not seen before. If he cannot swim, let him sink under and drink, then lift him out; if he can swim, push him under at intervals so that he drinks his fill of water even against his will; for so his thirst and dread of water are removed at the same time.[28]

This is given by Celsus as the only remedy for hydrophobia, if it has progressed to the point that cauterisation of the dog bite, followed by sweating the patient, will not help. The water tank treatment is followed by a bath in hot oil. Celsus notes that it is the Greeks who call the condition "hydrophobia."[29]

The key feature of modern phobia diagnosis, that the level of fear is unreasonable, has its own classical counterpart in Caelius Aurelianus who, in his discussion of mania in *On*

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[24] E.g. Thorpe and Salkovskis 1997, 83.

[25] Davey 1997, xiii-xiv.

[26] Gourevitch and Gourevitch 1982, 888.

[27] Davey 1997, xiv.

[28] Celsus 5.27c; tr. Grieve 1814, cited by Thorpe and Salkovskis 1997, 83.

[29] ... *hydrophobas Graeci appellant*.

Chronic Diseases 1.5, notes that the impairment of rationality in mania can show itself "as some relate, in an overpowering fear of things that are quite harmless".[30] He expands on this by stating that the affected person "will be afraid of caves or will be obsessed by the fear of falling into a ditch";[31] while Democles is not mentioned here, his case may come to mind, as he can manage ditches only by walking through them, rather than over them.

The reference to mania in this context is interesting. In Hippocratic texts, as we have just seen, it is melancholy, rather than mania, which is associated with fear. Caelius Aurelianus shows that this was not the only view taken in antiquity, as he explicitly distances from the diagnosis of melancholy his own discussion of irrational fears, stating that, while Apollonius Mus says that melancholy is a form of mania, "we distinguish melancholy from mania".[32] Caelius Aurelianus' section on melancholy is far shorter than that on mania, and differentiates the two conditions by saying that in melancholy the *stomachus* (oesophagus) is affected the most, while in mania it is the head.[33] He further separates melancholy from hydrophobia, on the grounds that melancholy is chronic but hydrophobia acute;[34] here he sets himself up against Eudemus, a follower of Themison, who saw them both as the same condition. He insists that hydrophobia is a disease of the body rather than of the soul, even though fear is normally an affection of the soul; fear, he states, arises from a "sympathetic accord between body and soul".[35] He opposes the advice to immerse patients in water to force

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[30] ... *nunc timore comminante inanium rerum, sicut quidem memoraverunt*; Drabkin p. 539.

[31] ... ut *nunc speluncas timeant, nunc lacunas, ne in easdem concidant*.

[32] Drabkin p. 539.

[33] 1.6, Drabkin p. 563.

[34] *Acute Diseases* 4.12, Drabkin p. 369.

[35] ... timor enim per consensum animae corporis compatientis nasci perspicitur, 4.13, Drabkin pp. 368-71.

them to drink, a therapy which he associates not with Celsus, but with Artorius.[36] We can see here that the ancient texts were in dialogue, and in disagreement; there was no agreed position on irrational fear, so that later commentators were able to weave together the ancient materials to produce different results.

Where the stories of Nicanor and Democles feature in the current literature of phobia, the source is usually the article on "Some historical aspects of the concept, phobia" published by Paul Errera in 1962. Errera regarded Nicanor and Democles as sufferers from phobia, making them "two of the earliest clinical descriptions of men who feared 'that which need not be feared'". He quoted both cases in full, and believed that the Hippocratic diagnosis would have been one of melancholy, which he described as "one of the three major Hippocratic types of insanity".[37]

One of the subsequent medical writers who relied on Errera was Marks, who copied Errera's translations from *Epidemics* but added in the book and chapter references to *Epidemics* 7; 86 and 87. He did not mention *Epidemics* 5. On Nicanor and Democles, Marks noted, "*As one might expect* [my italics], Hippocrates gave good accounts of two phobic subjects".[38] The use of "expect" could be taken in two slightly different senses. First, it suggests that, as "Father of Medicine" Hippocrates has to be encyclopaedic, he must include at least one example of every condition known to modern medicine.[39] Second, it could be part of the much-repeated claim that Hippocrates is known for clinical descriptions ("gave good accounts") even where the theory is erroneous and the

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[36] Drabkin p. 385.

[37] Errera 1962, 327. Errera is also responsible for another standard part of modern accounts of the history of phobia; the origin of the term in the Greek *Phobos*, and Phobos as a god. Here Errera cites LSJ and Roscher's 1884 Lexicon (1962, 326); this material is repeated in, for example, Davey's introduction to his 1997 work on phobia, as well as in chapter 4 of that volume, by Thorpe and Salkovskis (1997, 82).

[38] Marks 1969, 7.

[39] On the rise of Hippocrates' "paternity", see King 2001b.

therapy ineffective.[40] Marks also notes the contrast between a culturally-specific (Nicanor) and a universal (Democles) phobia, commenting "Other phobias persist unchanged across the centuries – Hippocrates and Burton described the same fears of heights ... which we find so commonly today".[41]

Marks' dependence on Errera is shown by the fact that in both works the two Hippocratic case histories are immediately followed by a reference from Shakespeare to an apparent phobia regarding cats; in *Merchant of Venice* "Some are mad when they behold a cat".[42] In a more recent historical account of phobia, by Thorpe and Salkovskis, where Errera is also cited, the cat phobia story has been merged with the two Hippocratic case histories to produce the surprising claim that "[Hippocrates] also described a cat phobic", even though on the following page that cat appears again, but this time back in its proper place in Shakespeare.[43]

The passage Burton based on the pseudo-Hippocratic *De insaniam et melancholiam* has been used in modern work as an example not just of phobia, but of "social" phobia "from the time of Hippocrates"[44] or even less plausibly as "seen by Hippocrates".[45] Social phobia, in which the sufferer avoids social situations due to fear of embarrassment, is the most-researched of all the phobias, but is currently seen as having a psychopathology that is very different from that the others. [46] In DSM-IV terms, it is not in fact a "phobia" at all because a phobia is defined as "inappropriate fears to *relatively specific* stimuli or events [my italics]",[47] while social phobia is much broader. Yet it has

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[40] As I have shown in King 2007, 90-93, this was precisely how Hippocrates was represented in eighteenth-century obstetrics and gynaecology. See also below, p. 00.

[41] Marks 1969, 81.

[42] Act 4, scene 1. Marks 1969, 8; cf. Errera 1962, 329.

[43] Thorpe and Salkovskis 1997, 82, 83.

[44] Heckelman and Schneier in Heimberg et al. 1995, 3.

[45] Mannuzza et al. 1990, 41.

[46] Pers. comm.. Graham Davey, 11 August 2010.

[47] Davey 1997, xiii.

drawn into its net not only the Burton/Hippocrates description, but also the case of Nicanor, becoming the most common retrospective diagnosis of his condition.[48]

Writing the history of phobia II: Nicanor and Democles in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

If we are to understand the context of the Hippocratic case histories of phobia, we need to read them outside the framework of debates about melancholy versus mania, or about the nature of social phobia. Errera credited three sources for his brief comments on Nicanor and Democles: Armand Semelaigne's *Études historiques sur l'aliénation mentale dans l'antiquité* (1869), James R. Whitwell's *Historical Notes on Psychiatry* (1937), and Émile Littré's edition and translation of the Hippocratic corpus. [49] The volume of Littré in which these parts of *Epidemics* feature, volume V, predates Semelaigne, being published in 1846, and it is not surprising that it is in the French tradition shortly after Littré was published that the *Epidemics* case histories first have an impact on modern psychiatry. Whitwell does not in fact use them, and it is to Semelaigne's comments on them that I shall now turn.

Before the publication of Littré's translations of *Epidemics* 5 and 7 in 1846, the ideas about causation that would eventually be applied to them were being developed by Etienne Esquirol, a pupil of Philippe Pinel at the Salpêtrière, who set up a private asylum in Paris at the start of the nineteenth century and later influenced French national policy on the management of madness. He wrote a treatise on mental illnesses in 1838, after touring various French institutions for the insane.[50] This was translated into English in 1845. Rather than melancholy, a label which he attributed to Hippocrates but dismissed because it carried the baggage of the "four humours" of humoral

[48] E.g. Mannuzza et al. 1990; Heckelman and Schneier 1995, 3.

[49] Errera 1962, 327.

[50] Goldstein 1987, 128 ff..

medicine, Esquirol proposed using the term "lypemania".[51] Esquirol praised Hippocrates and other ancient writers in uncovering the true causes of lypemania, extrapolating such causes from ancient remedies, as interpreted by him; for example, because he believed lypemania involved displacement of the transverse colon, he interpreted ancient purging as a remedy performed "to restore the tone of all the abdominal viscera".[52] Between mania and lypemania he positioned "monomania", and he regarded this as being particularly influenced by changes in culture.[53] For example, he believed that people in his own time were predisposed to believe they were kings or queens as a result of France's recent political upheavals.[54] The sufferer from lypemania was "triste et depressive", while someone with monomania was characterised as "gaie et expansive".[55] Nicanor and Democles did not feature under either category.

It was in 1869 that these two men entered nineteenth-century discussions of mental illness; this was when Armand Semelaigne picked up Esquirol's linking of symptoms and social change, arguing that the history of madness was interesting precisely because of "ses intimes rapports avec la civilisation et les doctrines philosophiques régnantes". He cited Esquirol's *Des maladies mentales*: "Les idées dominantes dans chaque siècle influent puissament et sur la fréquence et sur le caractère de la folie".[56] He proposed that Hippocrates established the foundations of psychiatry, and that the main divisions found in his works still formed the basis of the classifications used, even if theories

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[51] Esquirol 1838, 22; 1845, 29; Goldstein 1987, 156. The attribution to Hippocrates features in 1838, 398 = 1845, 199.

[52] Esquirol 1838, 463;1845, 225. This is analogous to Valles' attempts, discussed above, to explain why Nicanor's case should be read alongside *Aphorisms*, 4.9, on purging to cure melancholia.

[53] Goldstein 1987, 158-9.

[54] Goldstein 1987, 159.

[55] 1838, 406 = 1845, 203.

[56] Semelaigne 1869, 6 citing Esquirol 1845, 43. In the 1845 English translation this appears on p.39; "The prevailing sentiments of every age, exercise a powerful influence, over both the frequency and character of insanity".

explaining these categories had changed over time.[57] Using Littré's translation, Semelaigne discussed Nicanor and Democles in his chapter on melancholy, based on the remark in *Aphorisms* 6.23 that, if fear or sadness persists for a long time, then this is a melancholic condition.[58] He prefaced the case histories with a discussion of *Regimen* 1.35, on those who fear what does not need to be feared.[59] In this Hippocratic treatise, melancholy is said to derive from situations in which fire is overpowered by water.

As for the Anglo-Saxon tradition, in 1925, John Oliver read a paper at the American Psychiatric Association meeting in Richmond, Virginia, on "The Psychiatry of Hippocrates". Saddened by the rise of scientific study at the expense of Latin and Greek, he argued that psychiatry is an art, rather than something to be "learned and practiced by any high-grade moron who will devote himself to its study for a certain length of time".[60] He urged his audience to read the Hippocratic corpus, because they would find that much of the material "has a strangely modern sound, a familiar modern atmosphere".[61] While Semelaigne's use of Nicanor and Democles depended on their availability in Littre's translation, Oliver's interest in Hippocrates was clearly sparked by the publication in 1923 of the first two volumes of the Loeb translations of the corpus, including Jones' renditions of *Epidemics* 1 and 3, but Oliver also used Littré for the rest of the corpus which was not, at that time, available in the Loeb. He presented *Epidemics* as deriving directly from "the history-room at the medical school at Cos"; "we have the remains of its contents".[62] In terms of psychiatry, he noted that in Hippocrates' period "the society of Athens and of the other important cities of Greece was a highly

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[57] Semelaigne 1869, 7.

[58] Semelaigne 1869, 33. Rufus fr. 73 Pormann, preserved in Galen's commentary on Book 6 of *Epidemics* (which may itself have been based on Rufus), also cites the Hippocratic linking of fear and melancholia.

[59] Semelaigne 1869, 36-7.

[60] Oliver 1925, 113.

[61] Oliver 1925, 107.

[62] Oliver 1925, 111. 'History' is used in the sense of 'case-history'; we would call this the Records Room.

organized one. It has its elements of emotional stress and strain. As a result there were psychasthenic patients in plenty, with their inhibition and phobias".[63] He placed the descriptions of Nicanor and Democles among these "psychasthenic" cases. In the absence of a Loeb, he gave his own translation. Here is his version of Nicanor:

> When, of an evening, he took his first drink, the woman, who played the flute, terrified him. Whenever he was at a banquet and heard the first notes of the flute, hosts of fears encompassed him. He could scarcely endure it, so long as it was night. But during the day, he said that he could listen to the instrument without any emotional disturbance.[64]

This translation, especially the development "When ... Whenever", could suggest to the reader that Nicanor was terrified by a woman playing the flute on one occasion, and thereafter had the same reaction whenever he heard a flute within the context of a meal. It deviates from its source, Littré, in some respects. Littré gives:

> L'affection de Nicanor: quand il se lançait à boire, la joueuse de flûte l'effrayait; entendait-il dans un festin les premiers sons de flûte? des terreurs l'obsédaient;[65] il disait pouvoir à peine se contenir, quand il était nuit; mais, de jour, s'il entendait cet instrument, il n'éprouvait aucune émotion. Cela dura longtemps (5.251).

These have in common the idea that he was specifically "frightened" by the flute-player; while the use of the imperfect in French prevents this from being a single historical incident, in English it can be read that way. In Greek it is simply that his *pathos* was *phobos tês aulêtridos*.[66] I am not sure how Littré created a question, as *hokote* (= *hopote*) simply means "when". It is interesting that Oliver's extract omits the chronic nature of the condition which, as we have seen, had been so important for earlier medical writers

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[63] Oliver 1925, 111.

[64] Oliver 1925, 112.

[65] Jouanna and Grmek 2000, 170 n.7 dismiss Littré's translation of this phrase as "un peu lâche", preferring "dès qu'il entendait le son de la flûte, sous l'effet de terreurs il avait des malaises".

[66] Gourevitch and Gourevitch 1982, 888.

in supporting a diagnosis of melancholy; once melancholy was no longer a disease category, attention shifted to other parts of the text.

One further contribution from the French tradition, and one which was rapidly transmitted to the English-speaking world, should also be mentioned here. In 1934 Alexandre Souques published two articles in the journal *Revue Neurologique*. Here he described the cases of Nicanor and Democles from *Epidemics* 5, repeating this material in his 1936 book, *Etapes de la neurologie dans l'antiquité*.[67] His main point was that, despite only a sketchy knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of the brain and the nervous system, Hippocrates' clinical understanding was excellent, as he knew how to observe, how to collect facts and how to compare them.[68] He praised one case history, for example, as representing "une admirable observation" and as "cette irréprochable observation".[69] When he gave the case histories of Nicanor and Democles, he presented them in a section on depressive states of nervous origin; specifically, as "des exemples d'obsessions et de phobies". He used Littré's translations, and correctly summarised Nicanor's problem as being "obsessed by the sounds of the flute".[70]

Souques's first 1934 article was summarised in *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* in the following year by "Freeman of Washington DC"; this has to be Walter Jackson Freeman, head of neurology at George Washington University, who was to become infamous after he began performing frontal lobotomies in 1936.[71] Freeman believed that many psychiatric conditions had organic origins, so that treatment should take place on the brain itself; ancient medicine, in which the mind/body divide was placed

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[67] Souques 1934, 197; 1936, 92-3.

[68] "Autant son anatomie est superficielle et sa physiologie imaginaire, autant sa clinique est profonde et réelle", Souques 1936, 50-1.

[69] Souques 1936, 72.

[70] 1936, 92. "Sounds" of the flute picks up the Greek of the *Ep*. 5 version, *phônê aulou*. There is one difference between his versions of the story of Nicanor: the 1934 version has "mais, de jour" (following Littré 7.445) and the 1936 has "mais, le jour".

[71] Freeman 1935.

very differently to that of modern medicine, was thus of interest to him.[72] In the abstract of Souques' article, Nicanor and Democles are included;[73] however, Freeman translates Souques' "Tel l'exemple de Nicanor, obsédé par les sons de la flûte. « Entendait-il dans un festin les premiers sons de flûte, les terreurs l'obsédaient … »" by summarising it as "Nicanor was obsessed with sounds of the flute; at the first notes terror possessed him". He omits "le festin", and therefore loses entirely the symposiastic context of the condition.

The symposium and the *aulos*

Freeman's omission of the symposium is consistent with the historical lack of interest in this feature of ancient society as a social ritual; scholarly attention only turned to it in the late 1960s, as the result of a greater interest in Greek and Roman social customs, and the influence of social anthropology on the classics.[74] An appreciation of the symposium is based on an understanding of how, in agricultural societies, "Culture ultimately derives from the various modes of the ritualized use of an economic surplus".[75] The symposium is now understood as "in many respects a place apart from the normal rules of society, with its own strict code of honour in the *pistis* there created, and its own willingness to establish conventions fundamentally opposed to those within the *polis* as a whole".[76] The size of the group would be between 14 and 30 men, two to a couch.[77] At the end of the symposium, the participants would take part in the *komos*, a public drunken riot done to demonstrate the group's power; this disorder was, however, of a very controlled type, with a steady build-up during the rest of the symposium, and although it is a group activity it is "a group activity with everyone on

[72] El-Hai 2005, 70.

[73] Souques 1935, 656.

[74] Murray 1990, 8.

[75] Murray 1990, 4.

[76] Murray 1990, 7.

[77] Murray 1990, 7.

his own".[78] Not every symposium was an elite occasion; recent scholarship shows that these dining events occurred lower down the social scale too, including "the mercantile, artisan or peasant classes".[79] As an event combining the consumption of wine, jokes, discussions of politics and of the nature of love, singing and music, with specific types of pottery and of extempore songs associated with it, and creating both homosexual bonds and an atmosphere for uninhibited heterosexual activity with the entertainers, the symposium – at least in its elite manifestations – could certainly be stressful. It would thus appear to be an important focus for what Oliver described as the "elements of emotional stress and strain" in ancient Athens; as Pellizer put it, "the actual guests put themselves to the test in front of the group".[80] The two parallel passages in which Nicanor's affliction is described are the only references to the symposium in the Hippocratic corpus.

If we look back even before Semelaigne and Littré, we can see that the symposium had already been lost in translation. In Latin versions of the *Epidemics*, it had become a simple *conuiuium*, a banquet, or just "drinking".[81] In the sixteenth century, there was however considerable interest in other aspects of the symposium, such as the seating arrangements; Antony Blunt traced to the sixteenth century the use of archaeological finds to make artistic representations of feasts – including the Last Supper – more accurate.[82] Significant here was a medical treatise, Mercuriale's *Artis gymnasticae libri sex* (1569), which included a chapter on "reclining at dinner in antiquity"; Mercuriale

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[78] Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarague 1990, 227.

[79] Pellizer 1990, 180-1.

[80] Oliver 1925, 111; Pellizer 1990, 183.

[81] E.g. Valles 1554, 546, *quum in conuiuium progrediebatur*; compare the edition of 1652, 271, *Nicanoris passio cum in potum progrederetur...* Foës 1595, 252: *Nicanor cum ad conuiuium prodiret...*

[82] Blunt 1939; Jeanneret 1987, 28 on humanists and the etymology of *convivium*. I owe these references to Oswyn Murray.

used an ancient representation of the triclinium from the palace of Paolo Ramnusio at Padua to explain literary descriptions of the symposium.[83]

In eighteenth-century English translations of *Epidemics* 5 and 7, not only the context of the symposium, but even the female gender of the flute player, went unnoticed. In Francis Clifton's 1734 translation of Nicanor's story, "when he was oblig'd to go to a drinking-bout, he was always afraid of a flute; and, when the piper began to play, the musick immediately threw him into such a great fright, that he was not able to bear the disorder of it, if it was night".[84] In Samuel Farr's 1780 version, "when he went to a feast he took an aversion to the sound of the trumpets".[85]

This reference to trumpets raises the question of what exactly an *aulos* is, and what its role would be within the symposium. Although the usual English translation is "flute", it is in fact a double pipe instrument with a reed, played not like today's flute, but more like an oboe. A halter could be worn to support the pipes and also to prevent the cheeks from distorting; it is possible that this meant the player breathed in through the nose, and out through the mouth.[86] It is not clear whether the two pipes would normally be identical in length and width, nor whether they would be played together or one at a time; vase paintings, using two dimensions to represent three, are not easy to read in this regard.[87] The fact that the sound is referred to in the singular as "the sound of an

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[83] Mercuriale 1569, 122 and fig. 6.

[84] Clifton 1734, 231. It is not clear what Greek or Latin version he was using here, to get "disorder".

[85] Farr 1780, 165. This version was dismissed as a poor one by both Adams and Jones; see Graumann 2000, 25 n. 131.

[86] Bundrick 2005, 35. The film *Agora* (2009) includes a scene in which the *aulos* is played. The track in which this features, "Orestes' Offering", can be heard on http://mp3.tac.az/index.php?name=News&op=Article&sid=29839&newlang=en accessed 15 February 2011. Other attempts to reconstruct the sound can be found on http://www.oeaw.ac.at/kal/agm/ accessed 12 February 2011.

[87] Gentili and Luisi 1995, 19 and 31; Bundrick 2005, 35. As for the contribution of archaeology, the difficulty is that no complete instrument survives; the "Reading *aulos*"

aulos" could be taken to suggest that only one pipe is heard at any one point. References to the "maiden *auloi*" (*parthenioi*) and the "wedding *auloi*" in which a "male" and a "female" pipe appear suggest that there were different instruments for different occasions, and an analogy may be drawn here with the Bolivian pan-pipes, where different types existed and were played seasonally, for example to make it rain.[88]

As Peter Wilson noted, the *aulos* was "everywhere" in classical Athens.[89] It was used to accompany the army and to keep rowers in time.[90] It was associated with certain mystery cults, being played at Eleusis and in Dionysiac rites, and Proclus specifically comments on the effect of the *aulos* on the emotions of someone undergoing initiation.[91] In mystery cults, as in the symposium, the player would be female.[92] In classical Athens, it also featured in state religion, being played while sacrifices were offered, and accompanied athletics competitions.[93] It featured at weddings and funerals.[94] It was also part of Greek drama. The choruses and solo songs of Greek plays were accompanied by an aulete,[95] who would be a "dignified, formally costumed" figure; as we shall see, this makes him quite unlike his female counterpart at the symposium.[96]

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represents only one pipe of the two. See http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/8anytvYGS9WNYBlhOlXAjQ accessed 3 January 2011, which suggests a single reed; this is not the view of all scholars.

[88] Wilson 1999, 70; Stobart 2000, 40-2.

[89] Wilson 1999, 58.

[90] Wilson 1999, 80-1; Wallace 2004, 261-2; Bowie 2004, 227.

[91] Hardie 2004, 16-17.

[92] Barker 2004, 198.

[93] Landels 1999, 3 and 5; Wilson 1999, 79.

[94] Wilson 1999, 80.

[95] Wilson 1999, 76; Barker 2004, 200.

[96] Barker 2004, 203.

It was also a sexualised instrument. In a scene from Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, a Scythian archer – one of the police force at Athens – refers to the carrying case in which his arrows were kept (the *sybênê*, a term also used for the carrying case for the *aulos*). He puns on *binein* (to fuck), to come out with a line translated in Sommerstein's version as "I've lost my shaft-case by shafting" – the woman in this case, conveniently, being a flute-girl.[97] Both the penis and the *aulos* were seen as difficult to control.[98]

While not every woman playing a flute was immoral – plenty of "decorous" scenes exist on vase paintings[99] – it appears that women did not play at public events. The *aulêtris*, who sets off Nicanor's reaction, is in a category on her own. At the symposium, the *aulos* was used to set the rhythms by which the wine was prepared, served and drunk.[100] Davidson associated this instrument with "music for working and moving", in processions and marches;[101] in the symposium, it was first played at the start of the drinking. The halter was not worn by an *aulêtris*, so her cheeks were distorted.[102] Bearing in mind how the sound was produced, Clifton's "piper" may indeed be a better translation than "flute-girl", but "flute-girl" (Gk *aulêtris*) is a term that says much about the player, as well as the instrument.

So what exactly is an *aulêtris*? Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarague suggest that the flute-girl is "herself an instrument", and they have shown how many images of her on "Anakreontic" vases of the period 510-460 BC present her as static while she plays, with a man dancing next to her.[103] As many texts and vase paintings clearly show, the *aulêtris* had what Andrew Barker, discussing Aristophanes, *Birds* 667-8, calls a "tawdry image"; "the all too familiar, degraded figure of the slave-girl hired out to play the pipes and to

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[97] *Thesm*. 1215; Sommerstein 1994, 236-7.

[98] Wilson 1999, 72.

[99] Bundrick 2005, 41.

[100] Wilson 1999, 82.

[101] Davidson 1997, 81.

[102] Bundrick 2005, 35.

[103] Frontisi-Ducroux and Lissarague 1990, 224.

double as a prostitute".[104] Landels writes "the connection was so firmly established that the Greek word for a female aulos-player, *aulêtris*, was regularly used to mean a high-class prostitute".[105] Pellizer notes that the symposium could include "(and perhaps fairly frequently) activities which might cause a modest classical scholar to blush" and refers coyly to "the extramusical activities of flute-girls".[106] He has in mind here references to their extensive oral skills; what Henderson, basing himself on Aristophanes' *Wasps* 1335-81, calls "the polite ritual of symposiac fellation", and what Wilson described as "the likely overlap of sexual and musical services".[107] Another famous passage used in discussions of the status of the flute-girl is Athenaeus 607d, where it is claimed that she was usually auctioned off at the end of the night. Wilson also reminds us that, according to the *Constitution of Athens* 50.2, the city officials (the *astyonomoi*) charged with ensuring that the fee for a flute-girl's services does not exceed two drachmas were also those who dealt with blocked drains and collecting dung from the streets; "the rougher edges of the line between public and private".[108]

While translations of Nicanor's story tended to lose the symposium, and thus the significance of the *aulêtris*, this female role could emerge in later readings of other Hippocratic treatises in which it had not originally featured. Thomas Rütten has pointed out that, in his 1651 book on generation, William Harvey refers three times to the Hippocratic text *On the Nature of the Child*, where a famous passage describes a slave-girl who is used as a prostitute being instructed to jump up and down until she miscarries what is said to be a six-day-old embryo. Perhaps because he was familiar with the association between prostitution and the flute, Harvey made the slave-girl, a

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[104] Barker 2004, 198. See also Serghidou 2001, 63 for the flute-girl as a "prototype of depravity and debauchery".

[105] Landels 1999, 7.

[106] Pellizer 1990, 181.

[107] Henderson 1991, 81, cited by Starr 1978, 408; Wilson 1999, 83.

[108] Wilson 1999, 83.

mousoergos (a player of a musical instrument, unspecified), into "a woman flute-player".[109]

But not everyone has seen the flute girl as a prostitute. In 1978, three years after Sarah Pomeroy inaugurated the modern study of women in antiquity with her *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves*, Chester Starr defended the honour of the flute girl in an article in *Parola del Passato*. He regarded the *aulêtris* as a "true professional", "trained to play a difficult instrument and to learn the music composed for it, which became much more complex in the fifth century".[110] Starr cited with approval the Dutch diplomat and detective story writer, Robert van Gulik, whose *Sexual Life in Ancient China* was written in the aftermath of Freud and Kraft-Ebbing on sexuality and aimed to show that Chinese sexuality was not about "perversion" but involved a recognition of female pleasure. [111] In this vein, Starr regarded flute-girls as closer to Chinese singing girls, "deft in social graces" and also literate, their sexual services being secondary to their other skills; here he followed van Gulik's representation of the T'ang dynasty "courtesan" as trained in singing and dancing, with the men who hired her lacking any sexual interest in her because they had quite enough sex back in their polygynous households.[112] In particular, Starr argued that the wages for a flute-girl were, at two drachmas per party, "at least the equal of a full day's pay for a skilled workman in the late fourth century",[113] representing flute-girls' "professional skill, not their sexual aptitudes".[114] Part of the problem in interpreting the ancient sources derives from the central place given to Plato's far-from-standard symposium, which is the most famous one of all; here, the

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[109] *Generation/Nature of the Child* 13 (*par'andras phoiteousa*); Rütten 2002, 40, citing Whitteridge 1981, 287; 335; 357.

[110] Starr 1978, 403 and 404.

[111] Van Gulik 1961; repr. 1974 with the Latin of the more risqué passages translated into English; see Furth 2005, a review article written to mark the 2003 reprint; Goldin 2002, 5-6.

[112] Starr 1978, 404 and 409; van Gulik 1974, 181.

[113] Starr 1978, 406.

[114] Starr 1978, 410.

flute-girl is sent out of the room when the intellectual conversation begins while, if it was not an elite event, I suspect she would have stayed put.[115] In the *Protagoras*, Socrates contrasts the symposium of the *kaloikagathoi*, where no flute girls feature, with those of ordinary people, where the voice of the *aulos* substitutes for that of intelligent conversation.[116]

As for the effect of hearing her instrument, views on the *aulos* shifted over the course of Athenian history. Like its female player, it was usually seen negatively by Athenians, as an instrument from other *poleis* – it was originally linked to Boeotia and Sparta – bringing in disorder. However, scholars such as Wallace have argued for an early fifth century "*aulos* revolution" in Athenian culture, in which this instrument was adopted in Athens "both by citizen players and by serious students of music".[117] In 490, Pindar even claimed that Athena was its inventor.[118] While sixth-century vase paintings featured the *aulos*, almost all showed it in the context of the *symposion*/*komos*, or in Dionysiac ritual; however, in the early fifth century, scenes in which a young male citizen is taught to play the *aulos* started to feature.[119]

A reaction against the *aulos* took place in the mid-fifth century, at a period when the Athenians were defeated by the Boeotians (457), and then lost the battle of Coronea to Thebes (446); this would not have helped the image of an instrument originally associated with Boeotia. The *aulos* was rejected in favour of stringed instruments.[120] In art, after 450 scenes of Athena appear in which she is throwing away the *aulos* in disgust after seeing the reflection of her distorted face playing it; the instrument was

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[115] Plato, *Symp.* 176e.

[116] Plato, *Protag*. 347c-d.

[117] Wallace 2003, 76.

[118] *Pyth*. 12; Wallace 2003, 79.

[119] Wallace 2003, 81.

[120] Wallace 2003, 82.

then picked up by the satyr Marsyas.[121] Athenaeus (616e-617b) preserves a comment of Melanippides, a mid-fifth-century poet, who in his *Marsyas* had Athena saying "Away, shameful things, defilers of my body! I do not give myself to ugliness". According to two lives of Alcibiades, in his youth the Athenian general (born around 450) did not want to learn the instrument because it made him look ugly; it was "a sordid thing, not becoming a free citizen";[122] however, ancient authorities were not agreed on Alcibiades' opposition to the instrument, and Athenaeus 184d quotes from Duris, who said that he did indeed learn to play it.[123]

As for its continued history into the period of *Epidemics* 5 and 7 and beyond, these collections of cases appear to date to the mid-fourth century. This dating is supported by a reference to a catapult injury sustained at the siege of Datum in 358-7 by Philip of Macedon (5.95 = 7.121),[124] and by references to Olynthus, destroyed by Philip in 348.[125] How would the *aulos* have been understood at that time? While it was less likely to feature in elite male education after 450, respectable women were shown on vase paintings playing it, and it continued to accompany dramatic performances and religious rituals, and to be played at parties.[126]

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[121] Serghidou 2001, 60-1 notes that Athena is the inventor, not the player, of this instrument. For an example of this scene see the 4th c mosaic on http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/11/arts/design/11mosa.html?_r=1

[122] Ps-Plato, *Alcibiades* 1.106e and Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 2; Starr 1978, 401-2; Vickers 1990, 114.

[123] Wallace 2003, 83.

[124] Graumann 2000: 53; Jouanna and Grmek 2000, xlii point out that Littré preferred to link this to an earlier siege in 453, which would make these books of *Epidemics* pre-date Hippocrates.

[125] Jouanna 1999, 390.

[126] Wallace 2003, 87 and 91.

The *aulos* was thought to have the power to take over those who heard it due to its "enticing" sound;[127] as Davidson puts it, "when the *aulos* played, men forgot themselves ... all flutes were half way to being magic ones".[128] Indeed, in Euripides' *Herakles*, performed in 416 BC, it is "the instrument of madness".[129] In his *Quaestiones conviviales* Plutarch asked whether flute girls should be allowed at feasts, and described a party getting out of control precisely because of the effects of the *aulos* music.[130] Aristotle's objections to the instrument, probably dating to just after the cases in *Epidemics* 5 and 7,[131] also see the *aulos* in terms of loss of control. At *Politics* 1341a26-35, he states that the instrument used to be prohibited for the young and for free men, then draws on this historical evidence to support his case against using *auloi* in schools because "they produce a passionate rather than ethical experience in their auditors and so should be used on those occasions that call for catharsis rather than learning" (1341a17-24).[132] Wilson makes a good case that the *aulos* was always an ambiguous instrument. While essential to the city, it was usually played by foreigners, and often slaves. In the city of *logos*, its sound was "the antithesis of *logos*", a threat to self-control and the cause of distortion in the aesthetics of the body.[133]

Nicanor and Democles

In contrast to the *Pseudepigrapha* version, the *Epidemics* give us the story of Nicanor in conjunction with that of Democles, and reading the stories together can provide further suggestions. Both concern loss of control. Both are chronic conditions. But there is

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[127] Pollux 4.72 and 73; West 1992, 105-6, n. 101.

[128] Davidson 1997, 81.

[129] Lines 871, 879, 897; Wallace 2003, 88.

[130] *Quaest. Conv.* 704c-6e.

[131] If we assume that *Politics* is part of the project on the constitutions of Greek cities composed by Aristotle's pupils, then perhaps 335-322.

[132] Ford 2004, 325-6.

[133] Wilson 1999, 58.

another link between these two men. In each case, the symptoms strike at a point of transition; for Nicanor, the moment when the symposium starts, and for Democles, when he is literally "on the edge" of a cliff or bridge. Reading Democles' story helps us to appreciate that Nicanor too experiences an "edge", as night starts, and as the symposium begins.

But what exactly is the *pathos* of Nicanor? Does it centre on the girl, the flute, or what the sound of the flute heralds? Despite Corvisier's attempt to suggest alcoholism is involved, Nicanor's symptoms are not brought on by too much wine; it is when he starts to drink, rather than when he has been drinking, that the symptoms start.[134]

The point that a symposium is much more than a drinking-bout (Greek *potos*, the first term for a *symposion* used in Nicanor's case history) or a feast suggests that Nicanor's fears derived from the competitive male context of the event, with the flute girl's music reminding him of a past failure, sexual or otherwise, during a symposium. This would explain why he was fine if he heard the flute in the day, but not if he heard it at night. But the cultural belief in its enticing sound, conducive to disorder, suggests that although the problem does not lie with the *aulos* itself – since he is not affected when he hears it in the daytime – the cultural baggage that surrounds this musical instrument leads him to fix on the moment when it starts to play as the moment when his fears rise up.

A final question concerning Nicanor revolves around his status at the symposium. Not everyone present there was invited. The *akletoi* or "uninvited", rarely studied in the literature, turn up hoping for some food, and join in the activities by imitating the paid professional dancers, and generally making the invited guests feel superior: *akletoi* "perform themselves as physically and morally imperfect", displaying to the guests "the exhilarating assurance of their own physical and moral inferiority".[135] Maybe Nicanor was not an elite guest, but one of these. Davidson regards them as the "male counterparts" of the *aulêtrides*,[136] which would make Nicanor's reaction to the *aulêtris*

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[134] Corvisier 1985, 106.

[135] Fehr 1990, 187 and 192.

[136] Davidson 1997, 93.

particularly poignant. Fehr associates the presence of *akletoi* above all with the fourth century BC, although he also finds a concern about "hangers-on" in the late archaic period.[137] He argues that the *akletoi* were in competition with each other, and would dance or fight "to make the invited guests laugh, so as to get a meal or a drink".[138] Competition, whether elite or not, could lie at the heart of the phobic reaction.

What of Democles and his fear of heights? Democles "seemed" (*edokei*), in Wesley Smith's translation, "blind and powerless of body". The use of "seemed" may suggest that the writer is simply describing what was presented, while reserving judgement as to whether or not Democles could really see. However, a further possibility is that Democles does not have these symptoms when the Hippocratic writer observes him, but is instead describing what happens when he is exposed to the stimuli. Within the text, his impaired vision and weakness are in a comparable position to Nicanor's fears, as subjective experiences which could not be witnessed by the writer. [139] This would explain why the term Smith translates as "powerless of body", *lysisômatein*, is not found elsewhere in Greek, with *LSJ* simply suggesting "relaxed". Is this the word used by the patient, made up in order to convey how it feels to him when he is on the edge of a cliff or a bridge?

On first reading, this story recalled one on which I wrote some years ago; the blinding of Epizelos at the battle of Marathon, where Herodotus tells us that this soldier lost his sight in both eyes when an enormous armed figure passed by him and killed the man beside him.[140] I argued then that, by attributing his blinding to a divine act in the context of a battle that quickly attained mythic status, Epizelos became a hero, and so could not easily recover later on. One question these case histories raise is why these two men decide to consult a physician about their symptoms; what is their *self*-diagnosis? Democles' consultation of a doctor suggests that he believed that his blindness had a physical origin, rather than being due to divine intervention.

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[137] Fehr 1990, 188.

[138] Fehr 1990, 191; e.g. "beggar envies beggar", Hesiod, *Erga* 26.

[139] I owe this point to Elizabeth Warren.

[140] Herodotus 6.117; King 2001a.

However, Smith's translation is not without its problems. The verb used here, *amblyôssein*, features in other Hippocratic texts not with the meaning "blind", but rather as "to see unclearly". Earlier translations may give a better sense of this; even Farr has "seemed to be affected with a sort of blindness" while Clifton gives "seem'd to be dim-sighted".[141] In one Hippocratic case in which this word is used, it is clear that the sufferer is able to see, because he has double vision.[142] In another, the doctor is advised to ask the patient if he has this symptom; unlike blindness, then, it is not immediately apparent to someone else.[143]

In contrast, the term used for Epizelos is *typhlos*; "from that time on he spent the rest of his life in blindness (*eonta typhlon*)". The word was first used in Homer, and denotes somebody with no sight whatsoever.[144] It is used twice in the *Epidemics*, to identify a person ("the wife of blind Maeandrios", *Ep*. 4.8, L 5.148; "As for blind Echecrates", *Ep*. 7.57, L 5.422). This does not necessarily imply that these people had been blind from birth; the same word is used in the sense of "going blind" in *Prorrhetic* 2.1 (L 9.6), and in *Epidemics* 7.26 it features when the son of Antiphanes goes blind in one eye and then the other, dying a few days later (L 5.398). On one occasion, it is used metaphorically; in *Breaths* 14 the patient becomes blind to what is happening (L 6.112).

Democles is not "blind" – so any suggestion that he comes with Nicanor because he is unable to walk without a guide must be rejected – but his vision blurs and his body becomes weak when he is exposed to cliffs or bridges. In this, his reactions recall those of Sappho in fr.31, where she states "sight fails my eyes" alongside symptoms of palpitation, sweating, and a whirring noise in her ears.[145] This passage has been seen as describing an "anxiety attack". The psychiatrist George Devereux put forward an interpretation of this kind in 1970, but Marcovich correctly noted that this is not an "attack" because the problem is chronic; Sappho's use of the subjunctive *idô* in line 7

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[141] Farr 1780, 165; Clifton 1734, 231.

[142] *Diseases* 2.15 (Littré 7.28).

[143] *Prognostics* 7 (L 2.128).

[144] Rose 2003, 80.

[145] ... *oppatessi d'ouden orêmm*'.

should be translated as "*each* time I look at you ...".[146] For Democles and Nicanor too, these are chronic conditions.

In exploring these two cases in *Epidemics*, we have seen further evidence for the image of Hippocrates promoted by the history of western medicine, as keen observer and comprehensive guide; this image is as common in modern psychiatry as in other aspects of medicine. The diagnosis of melancholy provides an excellent example of how later readers of the ancient medical texts wove together different comments from different treatises to make a disease. As for the diagnosis of phobia, while this is no less susceptible to the temptation to massage the sources to create a better story, it is interesting not only how far these two stories can illustrate features of DSM-IV, but also how this diagnosis places emphasis on different parts of the texts, so that "this affected him for some time" seems to hold less interest once the diagnosis of "melancholy" fades.

For Nicanor, I have argued that what is important is to recover the context of the symposium, historically lost in translation. This is not just a feast, but a very specific competitive male event. Nicanor's condition is thus not "social phobia" but rather something closely tied to a particular cultural context. Whether he is an elite diner or another type of performer, it is a form of performance anxiety, stimulated by a musical instrument that, for a Greek of this period, already came with its own emotional baggage. Democles' fear of heights is not culturally specific, but it is interesting that he too is affected at an "edge", in his case spatial rather than temporal. His appearance alongside Nicanor suggests that, from the patients' perspective, these men had discussed their symptoms, recognised similarities, and were sufficiently aware of Hippocratic medicine to think that there was a physical reason, probably an excess of bile, to account for their reactions to these very different stimuli.

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[146] Devereux 1970; Marcovitch 1972.

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